

Peginterferon alfa-2

peg-in-ter-FEER-on

Brand Name: Pegasys (2a), PEG-Intron (2b)



Peginterferon alfa-2 belongs to a class of medicines known as antivirals. This drug also belongs to a class called biological response modifiers. Antivirals kill viruses or stop viruses from multiplying. Biological response modifiers stimulate the body's response to infection and disease.

Peginterferon alfa-2a, also known as Pegasys, and peginterferon alfa-2b, also known as PEG-Intron, are approved by the FDA for the treatment of chronic hepatitis C (HCV) infection, a common coinfection in patients with HIV. It is usually prescribed in combination with ribavirin, another antiviral.

HIV/AIDS-Related Uses

Peginterferon alfa is used to treat chronic HCV in patients coinfecting with HIV and HCV.

Dosage Information

Peginterferons alfa-2a and alfa-2b are given by injection under the skin.

Contraindications

Individuals should tell a doctor about any medical problems before taking peginterferon alfa.

Possible Side Effects

Along with its desired effects, peginterferon alfa may cause some unwanted effects. Some side effects that may need a doctor's attention include anxiety; depression; mood swings; fever; continuing abdominal pain; bloody diarrhea; viral infection; trouble sleeping; irritability; chills, cough, or hoarseness; lower back or side pain; painful or difficult urination; nausea or vomiting; black, tarry stools; blood in urine or stools; pinpoint red spots on skin; or unusual bleeding or bruising. Individuals should tell a doctor if they have symptoms of any of these side effects.

Other side effects may not be serious and may lessen or disappear with continued use. These include abdominal pain; hair loss; loss of appetite; cough; diarrhea; dizziness; dry skin; dyspepsia; fatigue; chills, headache, pain in joints or muscles, runny nose, sneezing, or sore throat; flushing of skin; bruising, irritation, or itching at the injection site; malaise; musculoskeletal pain; nausea; aching, fullness, or tension in area of affected sinus; skin rash or itching, increased sweating; vomiting; and weight loss. Individuals should tell a doctor if these side effects continue or are bothersome.

Drug and Food Interactions

A doctor should be notified of any other medications being taken, including prescription, nonprescription (over-the-counter), or herbal medications.

Clinical Trials

For information on clinical trials that involve Peginterferon alfa-2, visit the ClinicalTrials.gov web site at <http://www.clinicaltrials.gov>. In the Search box, enter: Peginterferon alfa-2 AND HIV Infections.

Manufacturer Information

Peginterferon alfa-2
Schering - Plough Corp
2000 Galloping Hill Rd
Kenilworth, NJ 07033-0530
(800) 526-4099

Peginterferon alfa-2
Roche Laboratories
340 Kingsland Street
Nutley, NJ 07110
(973) 235-5000

Pegasys (2a)
Roche Laboratories
340 Kingsland Street
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(973) 235-5000

PEG-Intron (2b)
Schering - Plough Corp
2000 Galloping Hill Rd
Kenilworth, NJ 07033-0530
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For More Information

Contact your doctor or an AIDSinfo Health Information Specialist:

- Via Phone: 1-800-448-0440 Monday - Friday, 12:00 p.m. (Noon) - 5:00 p.m. ET
- Via Live Help: http://aidsinfo.nih.gov/live_help Monday - Friday, 12:00 p.m. (Noon) - 4:00 p.m. ET